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HOME ECONOMICS

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT THAT AID HOME SEWING

Successful home sewing requires good but not necessarily expensive equipment. Several articles that make sewing easier and more efficient can be made at home and at little cost. But in assembling equipment, think first of how much and what type sewing you do. Regardless of expense, economy requires that you have only the equipment that can be used to advantage for your sewing. For example, if you do only plain sewing, equipment designed especially to help in tailoring and in handling fine fabrics would be expensive and of little or no use to you; but if you do expert sewing, such equipment would be so useful as to be an economy.

One of the greatest difficulties in home sewing is fitting ones self and measuring hems in dresses. Oftentimes, even with the help of a commercial form, there are figure peculiarities that still call for special fitting. At small cost, and with an hour's help of two, or better still, of three friends who are painstaking and accurate in their work, you can make an exact duplicate of your figure and mount it to correspond with your height.

THE PAPER DRESS FORM

General Suggestions

Three people are needed for efficient work on one form. Each worker should have well in mind the procedure of work and the particular jobs she is to do before starting to make a form.

Arrange equipment for the greatest convenience and speed of work.

For accurate work and the comfort of the model, the work should be done quietly and speedily.

Choose a room that is well-lighted, ventilated, and comfortably warm. Also make certain before starting work that the model is feeling well and rested.

Equipment for Making a Form

TABLE of easy working height, covered with newspapers.

TWO OR THREE SPONGES each in a pan with a little water. These are for moistening the gummed paper strips.

SEATERS for each worker.

NEEDLE AND STRONG THREAD for sewing up front of vest and for drawing up lower edge, neck, and arm openings.

TAPE MEASURE for checking measurements of finished form with those of the model.

YARDSTICK for locating a line about the hips equi-distant from the floor. This will help in getting natural posture and height when mounting the finished form on a standard.

PENCIL for marking hip line and center back prior to removing form from model.

WASH BASIN AND TOWEL for washing the hands.

SAFETY PINS for fastening vest to stocking tops.

SHARP KNIFE for cutting through the paper roll.

Materials for Making Form

ONE TO TWO ROLLS GUMMED PAPER TAPE. Use one-inch width in light or medium weight, like that commonly used in grocery stores. The lighter, rather than the heavier weight, molds better to the figure. The amount of paper needed depends on the size of the figure. One roll is enough for an average size figure.

TWO GAUZE KNIT VESTS with high neck and short sleeves. Get two sizes smaller than the bust measure of the model. One vest is to be used as the foundation of the form, and the other as an outside covering.

CARDBOARD, WALL-BOARD, OR DOUBLE CORRUGATED CARDBOARD for closing the form at the hip, neck, and arm openings. The amount needed varies with the size of the model.

BRUSH AND SHELLAC sufficient for two coats.

NARROW COTTON TAPE for marking center front, center back, armholes, side seam lines, waist, and neckline.

STANDARD or materials for making one. It will be used in mounting the form.

Preparation of Tape

Measure long strips of tape as follows:

3 pieces about 30 inches long, two to be used at center back and one at front.

1 piece, waist length plus a few inches for lap.

3 pieces about 20 inches long to be used to brace the hips before applying the second coat of paper.

With sharp knife, cut from outer edge through to center of paper roll. For convenience in making the form, group pieces of tape into the following four lengths, not exact, but approximate:

12 to 14-inch strips to be used for hips.

9 to 11-inch strips for shoulder, back, and chest sections.

8 to 6-inch strips for shoulders and filling in above waist at lower front and back.

4-inch strips clipped about 1/2 inch deep on one side for modeling the neck. Several 4-inch strips (not clipped) will also be needed for holding board in place at hip, armholes, and neck. Use left-over strips of all lengths for reenforcing form on inside.

To Make the Form

The model should dress in a smooth, neat-fitting foundation garment of a type commonly worn. Wear no slip or bulky underwear. Shoes should be comfortable, with heels the height usually worn. Pull on a vest, being careful not to stretch it more than is necessary. Adjust to a snug fit and fasten with safety pins to garters or to tops of the stockings. Remove any excess fullness with small darts. Sew up the front opening with overhand stitch. The model must stand in a normal posture throughout the entire process.

Record measurements of the following: waist, hip, bust, and neck. These measurements are to be checked with those of the paper form after it is removed.

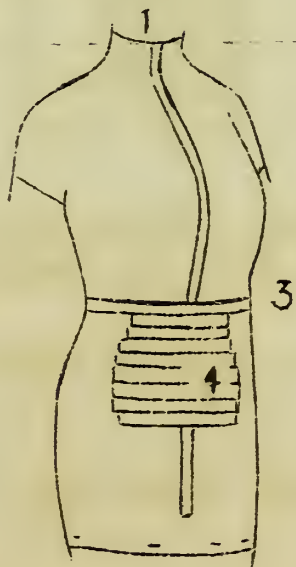
Take care that the work does not at any time concentrate on one side. This causes the model to lose her normal posture and one hip or one shoulder may be higher than the other.

Keep scissors at hand to clip places where the tape is difficult to mold smoothly to the figure, such as over the bust and shoulder blades.

Be careful not to use too long pieces of tape in any place, as lapping makes bulk and increases size.

Apply tape as follows:

Front 1



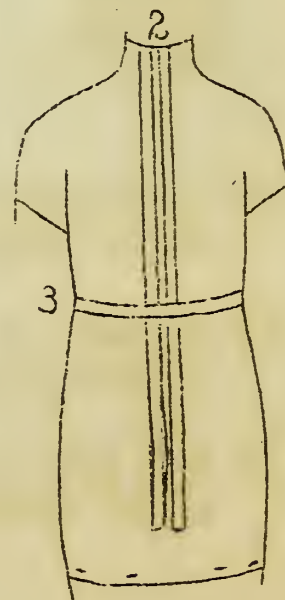
(1) One strip - 30 inches long down center front.

(2) Two strips - 30 inches long, placed parallel and 3/8-inch apart at center back.

(3) One strip about waist, drawn firmly, but not tight,

(4) A few strips about 8 inches long across abdomen as a brace for first coat. Lap all strips about 1/4-inch or less.

Back 1



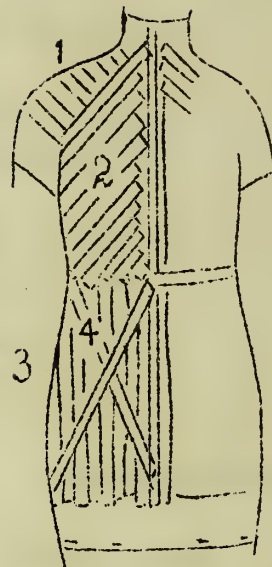
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Front 2

First Coat

Back 2

- (1) 6 to 11-inch strips over shoulders.
- (2) 10 to 12-inch strips from center front down to sides. 12 to 13-inch strips from center back down to sides. Place top strips well up under arm. When waistline is reached at sides use graduated strips to fill in remaining space.



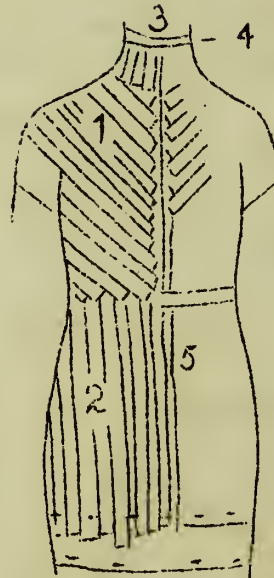
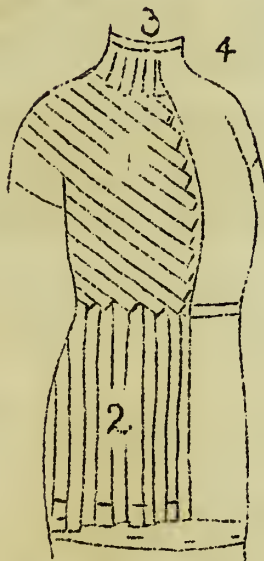
- (3) 14-inch strips placed straight up and down around hips. Begin at center front and center back and work to sides.
- (4) After first coat, brace hips with 20-inch strips placed diagonally before applying the second coat.

Front 3

Second Coat

Back 3

- (1) Starting from shoulder, work down both front and back as illustrated.
- (2) Apply second coat for hips like first, with strips over seams of first layer.
- (3) Finish the neck last. Use one coat only of 4-inch strips clipped 1/2 inch deep on one side.
- (4) Bind neck strips at top with a strip around the neck.



- (5) Mark parallel lines across back with a pencil and ruler. These are to be matched in sealing the form after it is removed from the model.
- (6) Measure an even distance from the floor around fullest part of hips. Record this distance on the form lest you forget.
- (7) Cut open the back in the 3/8-inch space allowed. Remove form and avoid crushing as much as possible.

Division of Work

The following division of work for three persons designated as A, B, and C is suggested as an aid to convenience and speed in making a form accurately.

A - Pull on vest and sew up front opening.

B - Pull down vest and pin to hose.

Apply long strips at center front, center back, and waist.

A - Beginning below waist, work from center back to left side. Apply two coats.

B - Beginning below waist, work from center back to right side. Apply two coats.

C - Apply two coats below waist across the front.

A - Left shoulder and left side of back. Apply two coats as illustrated on page 4.

B - Right shoulder and right side of back. Apply two coats, as illustrated on page 4.

C - Entire front, apply two coats as illustrated on page 4.

A - Apply strips to neck - one coat.

B - Measure for the cutting line around the hips.

C - Mark across back opening.

Steps in Completing Form

Trim off roughness of back opening so it will fit together smoothly. Check measurements with those previously taken of model and see that those of the form are the same in so far as is possible.

Match marks across back and seal the opening with short pieces of tape.

Reinforce inside of form with pieces of left-over tape.

Cut on hip line, and be sure the form will sit level on a flat surface.

Trim off the neck and armholes evenly, taking care that the arms extend a little past the armhole lines. Too much shoulder makes pulling dresses on and off difficult. Should you wish to use an arm model with the form, trim off at exact armhole line. This can be located with the help of a carefully fitted muslin foundation waist. Close the arm and neck openings with a fitted board held in place with strips of gummed paper. Bore a hole slightly larger than the size of the standard rod at center of neck board.

Stand the form on a smooth, firm piece of paper, and mark around the hip line to make a pattern for the base. Correct irregularities by folding right side of pattern over the left side, then test by placing form over pattern. The outside line of paper pattern should measure about 1/2 inch less than that of the form.

With form standing on paper pattern, drop a weighted string from the opening made in neck board to mark the space where hole is to be bored in base. This hole, also, should be made slightly larger than the standard rod.

Cut base and fit into place with small pieces of gummed paper lapped over edges. Avoid too many strips, as much lapping of paper increases size.

When thoroughly dry, shellac entire form. Apply a second coat when the first is dry.

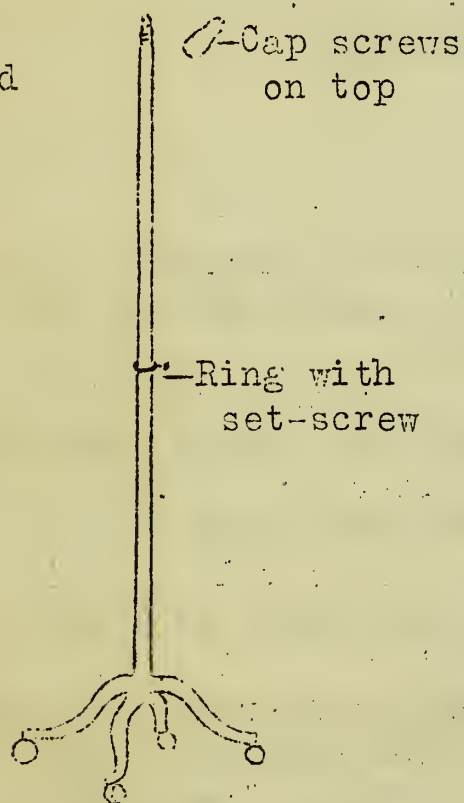
Pull the other vest over the outside of form, cut off surplus material at neck, armholes, and lower edge. Turn under one edge and draw up with strong thread.

With the help of a good-fitting dress or foundation pattern, locate and mark with tape the center front, center back, waist, armholes, shoulder, neck, and side seam lines.

Provide a standard heavy enough so that the form will stand steady, turn around easily on the standard, and permit taking apart for storage or moving.

Suggestions for Standards

Iron
Standard



Wooden Standards

Crutch tip

Broom or mopstick

Cotter pin

Heavy wooden
standard such as
Christmas tree
base.

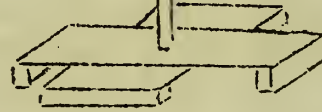


Cotter pin

Curtain pole or
(deck brush) stick

Cotter pin

Crossed pieces of
heavy wood.



A PAPER FORM OF ARM - an aid to sleeve designing and fitting. Begin at arm-pit, wrap arm smoothly and firmly with a long, bias strip (about 4 inches wide) of good quality cheesecloth. At top of arm place a triangular piece of cheesecloth, the bias cut side pinned to top strip of bias, the point pinned to a shoulder strap. Apply two layers of gummed paper wrapping around the arm. Mark a cutting line, also crosswise lines, to be matched in sealing. For cutting, use shears with rounded blade that holds flesh away from cutting edge. This is made easier if a razor or scissor blade is drawn carefully down the cutting line, partially cutting the paper. Finish with inside reinforcement and cardboard at wrist and armhole. Shellac and cover with a stocking leg pulled up close for a smooth fit.

TAILOR'S HAM

A tailor's ham is a great help in pressing armholes and curved seams where a flat board causes wrinkling. They may be made in any variety of sizes and shape that you find best suited to your particular line of sewing. For ordinary use, make one as follows: Cut from firm, smooth canvas two oval-shaped pieces about 12 inches long and graduating in width from about 6 to 2 inches. Stitch together, leaving an opening large enough for filling. Stuff tight with sawdust, or shredded scraps of cloth, and close.

PRESS ROLL

When pressing open seams which might become mussed if slipped over a sleeve board, a press roll is convenient. It can be shifted along inside the particular piece to be pressed.

Make a press roll by rolling a magazine tightly, then wrapping it smoothly with muslin that has been washed free of starch. Fold in and tack firmly at ends of the roll. If a very small roll is desired, pad and cover a section of a broom or mopstick.

SEAM BOARD

For pressing open silk dress seams so as to avoid stretching and dampening, use a hardwood seam board. Simply ask at a hardwood flooring company for a sample length of maple or oak flooring. A piece about 2 feet long is convenient to handle. In pressing, lay the right side of the dress directly next to the wood and press the seam open from the wrong side.

CLAPPER

Steam pressed woolens have a hard, pressed appearance when completely dried by an iron. After using it to steam and partially press the material, beat and press out the remaining steam with a clapper. It will preserve the sharp, neat edges and smooth seams that you want, but without the grayed appearance of hard iron pressing.

You can make a clapper by getting a piece of 2 x 4-inch pine about 15 inches long. If you wish, the piece may graduate from 4 to about 2 inches in width and the ends may be rounded off smoothly. Finger grooves at the sides make the clapper easy to hold.

BASTING BRICK

A basting brick makes handwork less tiring. Pad and cover a plain building brick. Place it on your sewing table, pin your material to it, then you can do handwork without bending over in the tiresome position necessary when you pin sewing to the knee.

MISCELLANEOUS HELPS

A PIECE OF OILCLOTH spread wrong side up over a table makes a good surface for cutting out garments. Because the cloth is slightly rough, materials will not shift and slide as they do on a hard, smooth surface.

PAPER WEIGHTS, GLASS FURNITURE COASTERS, OR SMOOTH HEAVY IRON NUTS are good for holding down patterns when pins seem undesirable.

A YARDSTICK or any long, smooth stick is convenient for holding large pattern pieces in place once you have them laid on the right grain of the material. Pins can then be put in without danger of shifting your pattern.

TISSUE PAPER used either dry or dampened, as the material may require, is often more satisfactory than a cloth in pressing silks. You can lay the paper on the right side, dampen with a sponge, and press without danger of iron marks.

A SMALL SPONGE in a shallow dish of water is more convenient and less disastrous to ironing board covers than a wet cloth for dampening spots to be pressed.

SHEER THREAD for basting leaves only a light mark which can be easily pressed out. Because of the smooth fineness of this thread it can be removed without leaving small pieces of fuzzy lint, which often stick in the material when soft twist basting thread is used.

COLORLED CRAYON PENCILS sharpened with fine points are good for marking perforations. Take care to get those with crayon which is like tailors' chalk, rather than waxy.

DARNING COTTON is better than ordinary thread for making tailors' tacks as it does not slip out so readily when the fabric is handled.

A STILLETTO serves for lifting basting threads as well as for punching eyelets.

BLUNT OR ROUND POINT NEEDLES are the secret in turning the bias tubing now being used in belts, neckwear, loops, and other trim.

DRESSMAKERS' PINKING SHEARS are time and labor savers for the woman who does much work with silks and woolens.

A TRANSPARENT 6-INCH RULER is more convenient and lighter to handle than a wooden one for the detailed measuring that goes with sewing.